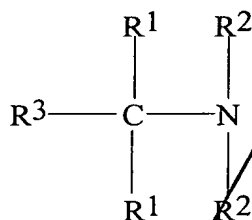


CLAIMS:

1. A liquid bleaching composition comprising an organic substance which forms a complex with a transition metal, the complex catalysing bleaching of a substrate by atmospheric oxygen, and a liquid carrier or solvent, wherein the composition is substantially devoid of peroxygen bleach or a peroxy-based or -generating bleach system.

2. A liquid bleaching composition according to claim 1, wherein the organic substance comprises a pentadentate ligand of the general formula (B):



(B)

wherein

each R^1 , R^2 independently represents $-\text{R}^4-\text{R}^5$,
 R^3 represents hydrogen, optionally substituted alkyl, aryl or arylalkyl, or $-\text{R}^4-\text{R}^5$,

each R^4 independently represents a single bond or optionally substituted alkylene, alkenylene, oxyalkylene, aminoalkylene, alkylene ether, carboxylic ester or carboxylic amide, and

each R^5 independently represents an optionally N-substituted aminoalkyl group or an optionally substituted heteroaryl group selected from pyridinyl, pyrazinyl,

pyrazolyl, pyrrolyl, imidazolyl, benzimidazolyl, pyrimidinyl, triazolyl and thiazolyl.

3. A liquid bleaching composition according to claim 2,
5 wherein the ligand is N,N-bis(pyridin-2-yl-methyl)-1,1-bis(pyridin-2-yl)-1-aminoethane.

10 4. A liquid bleaching composition according to claim 1, wherein the medium has a pH value in the range from pH 6 to 11.

15 5. A liquid bleaching composition according to claim 4, wherein the medium has a pH value in the range from pH 7 to 10.

20 6. A liquid bleaching composition according to claim 4, wherein the medium is substantially devoid of a transition metal sequestant.

25 7. A liquid bleaching composition according to claim 6, wherein the medium further comprises a surfactant.

8. A liquid bleaching composition according to claim 4, wherein the medium further comprises a builder.

9. A liquid bleaching composition according to claim 1, wherein the organic substance comprises a preformed complex of a ligand and a transition metal.

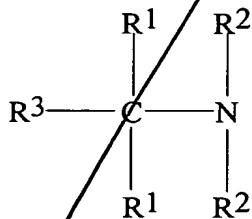
10. A liquid bleaching composition according to claim 1, wherein the organic substance comprises a free ligand that complexes with a transition metal present in the water.

5 11. A liquid bleaching composition according to claim 1, wherein the organic substance comprises a free ligand that complexes with a transition metal present in the substrate.

10 12. A liquid bleaching composition according to claim 1, wherein the organic substance comprises a composition of a free ligand or a transition metal-substitutable metal-ligand complex, and a source of transition metal.

15 13. A method of bleaching a substrate comprising applying to the substrate a liquid bleaching composition that comprises an organic substance which forms a complex with a transition metal, the complex catalysing bleaching of the substrate by atmospheric oxygen, and a liquid carrier or solvent, wherein the composition is substantially devoid of peroxygen bleach or a peroxy-based or -generating bleach system.

14. A method to claim 13, wherein the organic substance comprises a pentadentate ligand of the general formula (B):



(B)

wherein

each R^1 , R^2 independently represents $-R^4-R^5$,

R^3 represents hydrogen, optionally substituted alkyl, aryl or arylalkyl, or $-R^4-R^5$,

5 each R^4 independently represents a single bond or optionally substituted alkylene, alkenylene, oxyalkylene, aminoalkylene, alkylene ether, carboxylic ester or carboxylic amide, and

10 each R^5 independently represents an optionally N-substituted aminoalkyl group or an optionally substituted heteroaryl group selected from pyridinyl, pyrazinyl, pyrazolyl, pyrrolyl, imidazolyl, benzimidazolyl, pyrimidinyl, triazolyl and thiazolyl.

15 15. A method according to claim 14, wherein the ligand is N,N-bis(pyridin-2-yl-methyl)-1,1-bis(pyridin-2-yl)-1-aminoethane.

20 16. A method according to claim 14, wherein the method is conducted in a medium having a pH value in the range from pH 6 to 11.

25 17. Use of an organic substance which forms a complex with a transition metal, the complex catalysing bleaching of a substrate by the atmospheric oxygen, as a catalytic bleaching agent in a liquid bleaching composition substantially devoid of peroxygen bleach or a peroxy-based or -generating bleach system.

30 18. A method of treating a textile by contacting the textile with a liquid bleaching composition that comprises

an organic substance which forms a complex with a transition metal, the complex catalysing bleaching by atmospheric oxygen, and a liquid carrier or solvent, wherein the composition is substantially devoid of peroxygen bleach or a peroxy-based or -generating bleach system, whereby the complex catalyses bleaching of the textile by atmospheric oxygen after the treatment.

19. A liquid bleaching composition according to claim 1,
10 wherein the organic substance comprises a pentadentate ligand.

20. A liquid bleaching composition according to claim 19,
15 wherein the pentadentate ligand is in the form of an iron complex.

21. A liquid bleaching composition according to claim 19
having a pH value in the range from pH 7 to 10 comprising
N,N-bis(pyridin-2-yl-methyl)-1,1-bis(pyridin-2-yl)-1-
20 aminoethane, the composition substantially devoid of a
transition metal sequestrant having a higher binding
affinity for iron ions than N,N-bis(pyridin-2-yl-methyl)-
1,1-bis(pyridin-2-yl)-1-aminoethane.